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AGO, D/A ltr, 11 Jun 1980

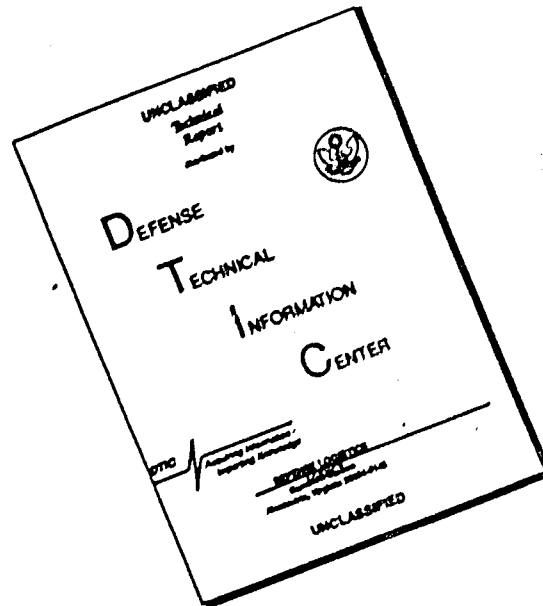
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (17 Jan 73) DAFD-OTT

31 January 1973


SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTC John D. Smith, Province
Deputy Senior Advisor, Pleiku Province, 5 May 71 - 10 Dec 72 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

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1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing report, (U) 2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of LTC John D. Smith, subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 525-14, as a result of subject report should be provided to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, ATTN: DAFD-OTT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

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VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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(Continued on page 2)

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PROVINCE ADVISOR'S
COMPLETION OF TOUR REPORT
(RCS: MACCORDS 174-01)

Section I

Name: JOHN D. SMITH

Grade: LTC

SSN: [REDACTED]

PII Redacted

Branch of Service: Infantry

Province: Pleiku

Inclusive Dates of Tour: 5 May 71 to 10 Dec 72

Expected Reassignment Date: 10 Dec 72

Previous Tour(s) in Vietnam: Oct 67-Oct 68

Assignment on Vietnam Tour(s) - District Senior Advisor and
DPSA/Senior Military Advisor

Section II

1. What background did you have for your position?

Served as District Senior Advisor for one year in a district that encompassed the Provincial Government.

2. What training did you have for this position?

- a. District Senior Advisor's Course - 1967
Civil Affairs Course, Fort Gordon.
- b. Province Senior Advisor's Course - 1970
VTC, Foreign Service Institute, Wash, D.C.

3. What additional training would you suggest for your position?

None.

4. What should be the length of tour for your position?

One and half to two years.

5. Was support from Region and/or Saigon Headquarters satisfactory?

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a. Saigon support was unsatisfactory in two areas.

(1) Adjustment of Official Village Boundaries. An overlay showing the boundaries and village headquarters, as they actually exist, was submitted by the province to MOI. However, the adjustments were not made, and follow up requests for assistance to RAD proved futile.

(2) Improvement of logistical support and the Troop Information program for RF/IF units. Members of the Territorial Security Sections at Region and Saigon were briefed on the low priority of support for territorial forces, and the lack of printed material available to troop units explaining the pay scale, unit punishment, promotion system, etc. Although repeated requests were made, particularly to improve supply and maintenance support, no support was received. These areas continued to be very weak in Pleiku Province, and there is very little that can be done, at the province level to improve this condition.

b. Region was unsatisfactory in two vital areas.

(1) Agriculture Program.

(a) A viable agriculture program is the key to improving the state of health, economy and general livelihood for the Highlander people. Realizing this, numerous verbal and written requests were made, to no avail, for a full time agriculture advisor or as a minimum, obtain one for periods of TDY during the planting season.

(b) This continues to be the most ineffective; yet, crucial program in Pleiku Province. The rural farmers are continuing to use stone age techniques. The only hope of improvement is through the training program conducted at the Highlander Training Center. Upon observing the activity at the agricultural experiment station and talking with Mr. Vaugh Stapelton, I am optimistic that goals can be achieved that should have been accomplished five years ago.

(2) Education.

(a) First priority for long range objectives was the improvement of the rural school system. Moreover, this is a vital program for the advancement of the Highlander people. Effective agriculture and education programs are the only ray of hope for these people in the foreseeable future.

(b) Repeated requests were made for text books in the appropriate Highlander dialects. Additional requests were made for school kits and classroom equipment. Some assistance was received but not enough. There are too many rural schools standing idle within the province.

(c) An attempt was made to hire the teachers who failed to graduate at the Highlander Normal School in Ban Mc Thuot. The idea was to hire teachers who were not qualified; but who were far superior to local talent. These personnel would teach in rural schools where security was inadequate. The only progress made in this area was to recruit and train the most qualified STRD Cadre and PF soldiers. This proved to be only marginally effective.

(d) There was very little, if any, progress made as a result of assistance received from the Regional or Saigon Education Advisors.

6. Were there any programs delayed because support was not forthcoming? Were there any programs that were especially successful because support was readily available? Which ones?

a. The programs mentioned in para 5 were the key programs that suffered because of a lack of support.

b. There are numerous examples of excellent advisory support. Region (OHA) and Saigon provided outstanding advisory assistance to Team 36 to launch the Land Reform Program. The US military, at II Corps, provided invaluable assistance to train RF in Air Cav and heliborne operations. The Social Welfare Advisor, at Region is to be commended for his efforts during the influx of War Victims from Kontum. He provided current information and follow up action to obtain large quantities of Social Welfare commodities and special equipment. He is continuing to provide outstanding support for the remaining refugees from Kontum and for Pleiku's war victims.

7. Do the reporting requirement as set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 provide a means for reporting all information of present and future value? If not, what changes would you recommend?

With the reduction in US Advisors and the anticipated phase out of the US military, I have no recommendations for changes.

8. Do the MACCPRDS Management Information System field Reporting requirements set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 adequately measure progress in pacification programs?

See Para 7 above.

9. Were instructions from higher headquarters clear with no conflicting requirements?

Instructions were always quite clear and specific.

10. The most clearly defined and directed programs are:

- a. Territorial forces
- b. PSDF
- c. VSD

11. The most effective paramilitary forces are:

- a. Regional forces
- b. Popular Forces
- c. PSDF

12. The most successful pacification programs are:

- a. Territorial Security
- b. VSD
- c. PSDF

13. The programs that have the greatest impact upon pacification effort are:

- a. Territorial Security
- b. VSD
- c. National Police
- d. Agriculture
- e. Education
- f. Public Information
- g. Public Works

14. The least successful pacification programs are:

- a. Agriculture
- b. Education
- c. Public Works
- d. Public Health (Sanitation)

15. The programs that have the least impact upon pacification efforts are:

- a. Chie Hoi
- b. Phung Hoang
- c. STRD Cadre

16. The rural people are aware of the pacification efforts the GVN and US are making?

The Highlander people are aware of the GVN's concern for their welfare. I am convinced that they will continue to openly support the South Vietnamese Government; however, the prominent Highlander people are beginning to question their future after the withdrawal of the US. Almost to the last man, the Highlander are pro-US. They openly state that the Americans have helped the Highlander people, and they regret our leaving.

17. The people are more committed to the GVN than when you assumed your job. Why?

The GVN has extended pacification to the rural areas through its successful VSD program. Social Welfare Service has shown genuine concern for the people at the thirteen resettlement sites and for war victims. Pleiku Sector has provided excellent artillery and TAC Air (Spoojy) Support, and reinforced remote hamlets when they were under siege. Because of this, the people have taken a stand against the Communists by joining the PSDF. On numerous occasions, during the past twenty months, the PSDF have proven to be outstandingly successful against guerrilla and aapper intrusions.

18. Do you feel that the pacification plan is sufficiently detailed to provide guidance and set goals that will result in the security and development of Vietnam. If not, what changes in the plan should be made?

The plan is too general/broad in scope. Perhaps a plan should be prepared for each MR assigning realistic goals and objectives which are germane to specific areas and ethnic groups. The present province plan is poorly written, it is not comprehensive, nor does it meet the needs of the province. Part of the reason for such a poor plan was because of the short time available between receipt of the National Plan and the production of the local plan. Surely a new plan will be prepared and funds made available to provide for the rapid expansion of pacification into remote areas and the rebuilding/repair of war damages.

19. Do you feel the plan was adequately explained to you and your counterpart?

Yes.

Section III

Territorial Security Directorate

1. Regional and Popular Forces:

a. The Pleiku Territorial Forces are the best trained and motivated paramilitary force in South Vietnam. The RF have been trained in the use of the Air Cav, heliborne operations, the use of Joint US and VNAF TAC Air, and planning for Sky Spots and ARC Lights. They proved they were a viable force in August 72 by conducting offensive operations and defending Thanh An District against elements of the 320th NVA Division. Again, they displayed self-confidence and professionalism during the month of October by inflicting heavy casualties on a battalion of the 48th Regt, 320th RVA Division at My Thach, Phu Nhon District.

b. Limitations: Four Battalions of RF have suffered moderate casualties among their best leaders and men during intensive combat operations in August through October 1972. The Territorial Forces have always been plagued by inadequate logistical support, mobility, and Organic Artillery. (A copy of final counterpart letter will be provided the territorial security directorate).

2. PSDF: Outstanding is the overall rating of Pleiku's self-defense force. There have been numerous occasions when the people, with the assistance of their organic PF, have prevented sapper units from entering their village. The unusually high rating is particularly warranted for the self-defense force along QL 19E and the My Thach area. Limitations: Communications are inadequate. This is due to an inadequate number of radios, repairmen and repair parts.

Public Safety Directorate

1. National Police Field Force: One platoon has been absent from the province since my assignment, and the company (-) is not utilized efficiently. Since the fall of area Tan Canh and the advent of conventional warfare in MR II, in April 72, the majority of NPFF have been assigned missions of VIP escort and local security within Pleiku City. The only productive missions they have performed are riot control, reaction force for national police, protection of Village Police Stations and the Village Chief during visits to remote hamlets. I have not observed nor received a report of this force participating in Gorden and search operations. This unit lacks control and discipline. The platoons should be reassigned to the districts and placed OPCON to the District Chiefs.

2. National Police: LTC Muoi the newly assigned police commander is a very capable leader. He has improved the organization, control, efficiency, and logistical support of the city police. However, his real test will be the redeployment of the MIFF and establishing a viable police force in the province's seventy-one villages. At present, police service in the villages is only marginally effective. However, in fairness to COL Muoi this can be attributed, in many cases, to the poor security condition in remote areas as a result of the NVA's Spring/Summer offensive.

Community Development Directorate

1. Village Self-Development: This is the most productive program in Pleiku. However, it is very important to continue the Hamlet/Village Chief training program at the Highlander Training Center. The greatest limitation of the VSD program is the poor administrative ability of the village officials.

2. RD Cadre: This program is proceeding well.

3. STRD Cadre: This is a very poorly administered program. Although there has been a change in commanders, since my assignment, there continues to be a lack of leadership, personnel and property accountability, and corruption in the Ethnic Minority Service and STRD Cadre. At present, this is not a viable program.

4. Local Government: With the change of many Hamlet and Village Chiefs under the provisions of PL 120, and the anticipated free elections of civilian Province Chiefs, there is an increasing need to continue advising in this area, and continue training of enlarge the present enrollment at the Highlander Training Center. With the large Highlander population and their present level of education, the Hamlet/Village Officials Training program is a must.

5. AID in Kind: This program is useful and effective. However, the regulation should be changed so that PSA's have more flexibility. This doesn't mean that the fund should be used to support programs when province officials fail to make their own system work. Another limitation is the fact that the request for special allocations requires excessive processing time.

War Victims Directorate

War Victims: The handling of 70,000 displaced war victims during the peak period of April - July is a vivid example of the ability of the Vietnamese to get the job done, when forced to do so.

There were many discrepancies in the management of funds, commodities and refugees, but the province officials deserve national recognition for their outstanding achievement.

Chieu Moi Directorate

This has been a very active and effective program in Pleiku's intense combat environment. This program should continue into the post war period to allow soldiers and civilians who were kidnapped or forced to follow the communist to make a personal choice.

Reports and Analysis Directorate

1. Report Requirements: This will have to be reanalyzed based on the number and location of advisors and the new mission during the post war period.
2. Report feedback: Quite adequate.

Agency for International Development

1. Public Health:

a. Very poorly administered program. One only, has to examine the police of Pleiku's streets to obtain an adequate assessment. This total disregard for sanitation extends into the rural schools and villages. The Minister of Public Health can only be compliment for the lack of wide spread epidemics among the Highlanders. Much needs to be done in health education and reassignment of qualified RF and ARVN Medics to Village Health Stations during the post war period.

b. Province Hospital: A concentrated effort must be made to staff the hospital with qualified ex-military medical personnel during the post war period. There will be a serious vacuum created when the lone KOPHAP Team is withdrawn in the near future.

c. The sanitary hamlet program is very effective in rural areas. However, province wide, the Rural Health Program is poor because of the state of training and the lack of medical supplies for the village medic. Moreover, due to the security situation many village medical personnel do not live in the villages.

2. Education: As mentioned previously, the rural school system is crucial for the development of the Highlander people. This program is suffering from a lack of emphasis and management at the national and province level, and void in qualified teachers, school supplies and equipment at the village level.

3. Public Works: Pleiku has a very weak Public Works Chief. There has been very little advisory effort in this area since my assignment. During the post war period, advice and assistance should be resumed in this area to repair streets and install sidewalks, drainage systems, and electrification of province and District Capitals. After ceasefire, there will be a real need to build farm to market roads to the heretofore in accessible hamlets. There are very few serviceable roads within the province with the exception of the Major LOC's. Thanks are due to the US Engineers and RMK for these roads and thanks to PA&E for a usable water distribution system within Pleiku City.

4. Economic Development. With the exception of wealthy merchants, the economy of Pleiku is at the substantial level. However, the future lies in improved farming techniques, livestock, forestry and the distribution of these products to the coastal lowlands.

5. Land Reform: This is a very important and thus far, successful program. Advisory and province official's command emphasis is being exerted to present the maximum number of land titles to the Highlander farmers before US withdrawal.

6. Domestic Production: There is a bumper rice harvest this year. However, because of the NVA's current offensive, logging production has almost ceased. Businesses in downtown Pleiku and Thanh An have suffered. Catecka, one of the principal economic assets, has been damaged by the war and the plant closed for two months.

7. Labor: At best, Pleiku's labor force is unskilled. There has been no effort to conduct vocational training, however, many of the Vietnamese have developed skills while employed at US Installations. The labor chief has been acting as an employment officer and employee representative for US Installations. Hopefully he will devote his energy to solving the potentially high unemployment problem on closure of the remaining US facilities.

8. Public Administration: During the post war period, a capable advisor should be assigned to this area to improve the government's responsiveness to the people, train newly elected officials, and advise on the implementation of the new tax laws. If the US is ever going to cease economic assistance, the Vietnamese system of assessment, collection and transfer of funds to the central government must work.

Joint United States Public Affairs Office

Psychops: This is another very important program with the pending ceasefire, and hopefully many years of peaceful coexistence just ahead. The people must be informed that their suffering and loss

of loved ones and property was a result of the communist invasions. The NVA/VC's atrocities and acts of terrorism must be exploited. Pleiku's VIS Chief is on the right track; however, the Sector S-5, and the VIS Cadre are very weak and unmotivated. Since the VIS personnel are relatively inept, and the program is vital to the continued stability of the South Vietnamese Government, I highly recommend that advisory assistance be resumed.



JOHN D. SMITH
LTC, IN
DPSA/Sr Military Advisor
Pleiku Province

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